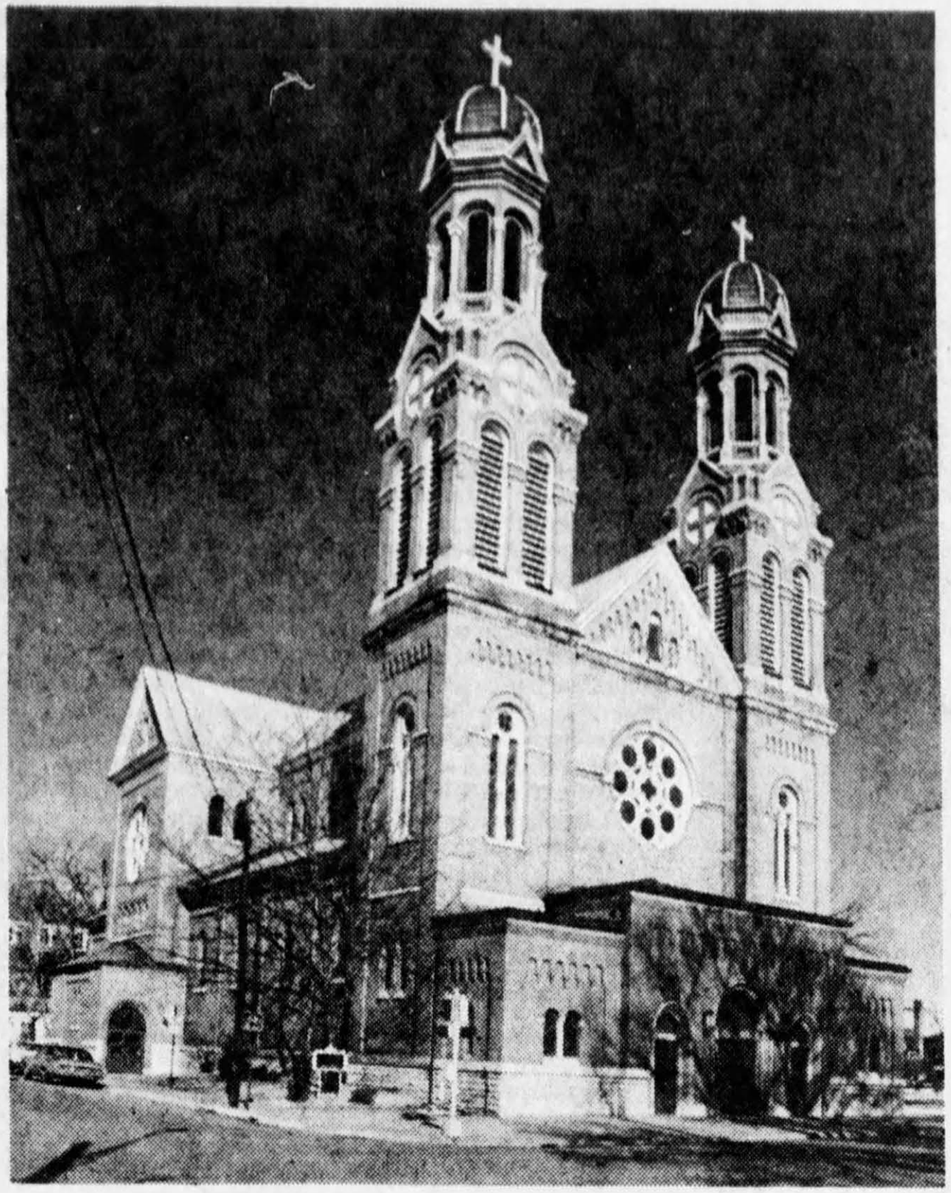
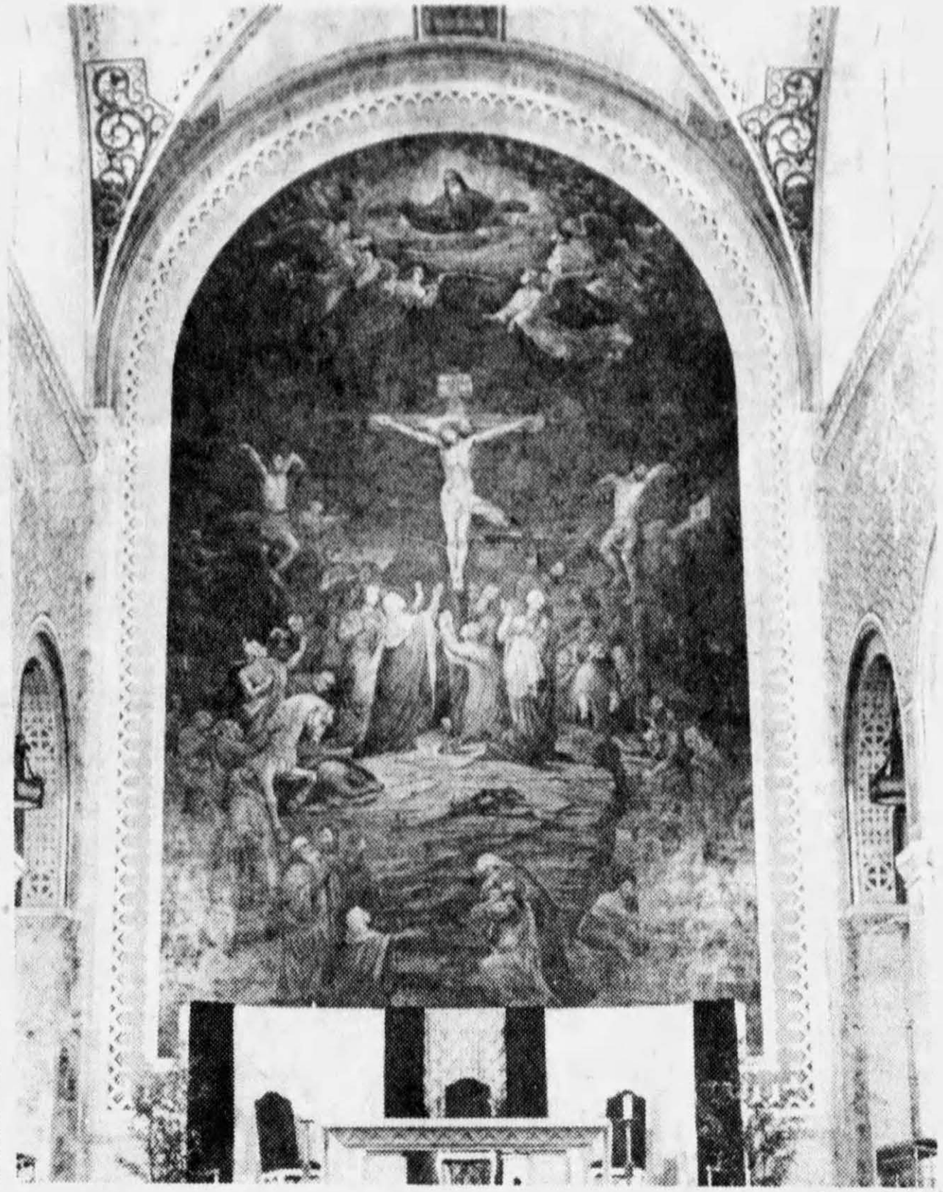
Bishop Krautbauer

Cathedral parish to celebrate centennial



St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, in downtown Green Bay, is modeled after the University of Munich's church in Germany.



Press-Gazette photos

A mural painting behind the cathedral's main alter was done by Johann Schmitt, whose art also hangs in the Vatican in Rome.

St. Francis Xavier Cathedral Parish and Bishop Aloysius J. Wycislo will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the church building Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 7 and 8.

Sister Theopane Hytrek O.S.F. of Alverno College, Milwaukee, will perform an organ concert at 7 p.m. Saturday in the church.

Masses on Sunday are set for 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Bishop Robert Morneau will celebrate the 9:30 a.m. Mass. Attendance at the 3 p.m. Mass is by ticket only and will be the liturgy of celebration for the centennial. Tickets are available at the parish rectory.

Bishop Wycislo will concelebrate this Mass, along with 15 other bishops and two abbots from Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula, Minnesota, Illinois and Indiana. Archbishop John R. Roach, of the Archdiocese of St. Paul, Minn., will preach at the Mass, as did his predecessor at the dedication of the cathedral 100 years ago.

Several dignitaries will be on hand from the area in Germany which brought over the builder of the cathedral and provided the second bishop of the Green Bay Diocese, Bishop Francis X. Krautbauer. They will include Burgermeister (Mayor) Joachim Hanisch of Bruck; Father Franz X. Hebauer, pastor of Bruck parish; Walter Wenninger, chaplain of the cathedral in Munich, and relatives of Bishop Krautbauer.

Monsignor Robert F. Gulig, who became the cathedral's rector in 1980, traveled to Bavaria this spring and was welcomed by the people from Bishop Krautbauer's homeland. He preached in German at all the Masses in Bruck, at which many of the late bishop's relatives were present.

Bishop Krautbauer, who took up his duties here in 1875, saw to the laying of the church cornerstone in the following year. Under his direction, the cathedral was modeled after the Ludwigskirche, the University of Munich's church, at a cost of about $35,000.

After five years of construction, the bishop consecrated the cathedral Nov. 20, 1881 in the name of St. Francis Xavier. Francis Xavier was the baptismal name of the bishop and the change from the former St. Mary's Church to St. Francis was probably intended to honor his patron saint.

The building's foundation was cut from stone at the Duck Creek quarry. The building stands 146 feet long by 72 feet wide. Its two towers rise 140 feet. The stained glass windows came from Innsbruck, Austria. A mural painting behind the main altar, approximately 28 by 40 feet, depicts the Crucifixian scene.

The work was done by Johann Schmitt, whose art also hangs in the Vatican in Rome. The original set of church bells was hung in 1881, but they neither harmonized with the old St. Mary's bell nor with each other. The manufacturer cast new bells which were installed in 1882.

Bishop Krautbauer died in 1885 and was buried beneath the floor of the cathedral. A granite slab marks the grave, bearing the inscription "Who Has Built This House to the Name of the Lord, God of Israel."

The cathedral towers were completed in 1903, extra electric lights were added and the main altar was renovated in 1908. The present sacristy was added in 1917. The church interior was redecorated in 1935 and its liturgical red and blue among the gold leaf remains today. A new church floor was constructed in 1957-59.

At the centennial ceremony, flags representing the nine European nations of Ireland, France, Belgium, Holland, Hungary, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and the Native American Indians will be hung for the 3 p.m. Mass, representing the peoples who comprised the diocese at the time of its formation.

A historical display of artifacts will be on view in a corner of the cathedral. Among the items will be Bishop Krautbauer's chalice, ring and cross.

Following the celebration Mass, a dinner will be held at Riverside Ballroom beginning at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are available at the rectory for $6.50 each for adults. Congressman Toby Roth and Mayor Sam Halloin are expected to attend.

A centennial booklet with color photographs will be available for $10 at the rectory.